



PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



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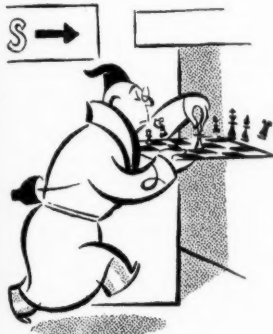
Charivaria

"If there is a serious paper shortage the output of novels may be halved," says a daily paper. But The Book of the Every Other Month Club will no doubt carry on.

It is reported that more delicacy and variety is to be introduced into the dietary of H.M. Forces. "Pack up your truffles in your old kit-bag."

Now that water-buses are running on the Thames there is a great demand for nautical caps on the Stock Exchange.

A daily paper publishes a picture of Mr. C. B. COCHRAN adjusting his monocle. In happier days he puts on tremendous spectacles.



We read of a bacon shortage in Germany. And there can't be very much Hamm left.

Two men played a game of chess in a London shelter during a recent air-raid. Luckily the "All Clear" did not go before the first move was made.

"A man who is let down by his workmates never really forgives them," declares a trade unionist. Has he ever tried to convince a deep-sea diver of that?



The story that GOERING had been flying over London is now denied. It would appear that it was just an ordinary thunder-cloud.

During an R.A.F. raid on Berlin the light from dropped flares was so bright that a newspaper could be read in the street. Few people, however, bothered to do this.

Nor does there appear to be any truth in the rumour that Lieut. R. DAVIES of the R.E.s is to be made a Miner Canon of St. Paul's.

A captured German airman was shown a kitten named after and resembling ADOLF HITLER. It was gathered that he had never actually stroked the animal's namesake.

"The first official communiqué in respect of the South African land forces was issued in Pretoria last night. It reads:

"There is nothing to report."
The Bureau of Information hopes to issue communiqués regularly in future."
Rand Daily Mail.
It's not at all bad for a beginner.



An Arab who recently celebrated his 110th birthday attributed his age to dates. One in September, 1830, being the most important.

"What we have always to remember is that these savage attacks from the air are a prelude to one of three things—Invasion, another 'peace offer' or continuation of the war."

*Military Correspondent,
Glasgow Evening News.*
And yet some people say our military minds are not far-seeing.

We have decided not to disclose the name of the unfortunate Italian admiral who has been ordered by his doctor to take a sea voyage.

On Being Bombed

THERE was a large piece of glass in my bath. I don't know why I found that so particularly infuriating, but I did. Other things had happened during a long and not too restful night. All the windows had been blown out on one side of my block of flats; a fairly large piece of an oil-canister was lying in one bedroom, and a tree outside was drenched with oil; there was a great hole in the road; there was no hot water, no gas and no electric light.

I wanted to have a hot bath, and when I found that I could not even have a cold one without picking glass out of it I was annoyed.

I began to feel for Hitler and Goering not that large impersonal dislike which one commonly reserves for destroyers of modern civilization, wreckers of world peace, thugs, and Gadarene swine, but the sort of vivid private animosity that is usually directed towards a careless servant, a casual acquaintance, or a lifelong friend. Twelve hours earlier I should have said that I was more angry with our Zone Commander, through whom a number of fatuously confusing orders had filtered (as we maintained) to the Section Leaders and the rank-and-file of the Home Guard, than with anyone else in the world, but I now began to see that I had judged far too harshly a quite well-meaning man.

I ceased to nurse indignation against him as an individual. He was merely a symbol of obscurantism and red tape. Even as a public enemy he was no longer in the foremost rank. I was inclined to relegate him to the Hess and Himmler class. Nay, when I remembered that his Headquarters were at this time very possibly surrounded by unexploded bombs, so that they were less approachable than a mediæval lazaret-house, I wondered whether he even belonged to the Fifth Columnist or Quisling category. "Merely a Pétain perhaps" I murmured with an unwonted outburst of charity, "and more to be pitied than despised." For here was this large piece of glass lying right in the middle of my bath. And no doubt there were other smaller and pricklier pieces, waiting to work into me if possible while I bathed.

More certain than ever was my conviction that these wicked men, who were not only responsible for inflicting the evils of Nazidom on Europe but had also damaged my windows, must one day be brought to account for their bestial crimes. In the meantime I rang up the glazier.



"HERE'S YOUR CUP OF TEA AND THIS IS ESTELLE FLOWERDUE HANDING IT TO YOU..."

When I had shaved and dressed myself and breakfasted in circumstances of inconceivable horror I went out to look at the hole in the road. Two men were working away at it, with the usual calm of the British labourer. I explained to them how near it had been to my flat and told them about everything that had happened to my windows, but they did not appear to be in the least impressed. So I asked them how big they thought the bomb would have been. "Most likely a five-hundred-pounder," they supposed. That was something to my credit at any rate. Not everybody at the office could boast of a five hundred pound bomb at his front door. Of course I should have preferred a thousand-pounder, but even the pair of flats in the adjoining block which had been completely wrecked two nights earlier had been struck by a far smaller projectile than mine. Nor was there anybody in them when it fell. The most stirring incident of that night had been the sudden galloping of many horses down the road. We had become completely indifferent to the cracking of the A.A. guns and the continuous drone of the raiders overhead: just as one grows completely indifferent to a noisy fellow-guest at a country-house tea-party who keeps banging away at a wasp with a folded newspaper and breaking the cups and saucers, and hitting his fellow-guests on the head every now and then. Or perhaps one doesn't. But the rush of the horses reminded us of a Wild West film or an old-time cavalry assault, and turned a confounded nuisance into an inexplicable mystery. Would the Germans have landed a squadron of lancers, we asked ourselves, and pushed them quite so far forward, and quite so soon?

There was nothing strange about it in reality. They belonged to the Associated London Milk Wagons, and their stables had been bombed in the night. After that one mad gallop they collected themselves, regained their morale, and began to move slowly from house to house all round the suburb, pausing at every gate to deliver a bottle of ghostly milk from an imaginary cart. They did not fear the shrapnel nor the naval guns. It was a triumph of equine discipline, and had to be invented to be disbelieved.

But all that, by this time, was ancient history. And while I was thinking about it the first siren of the morning took the sad autumnal air. "Reconnaissance," I thought sadly. "Coming to have a look at my windows." For having a large piece of glass in one's bath did really bring the war home, and made me think not only of the places where glass must long ago have gone out of use but of those quiet rural communities where they say that men and even women still sleep the whole night long.

I have a letter from a gardener who when the mood takes him attends to my cottage at the last edge of Herefordshire and the very earliest brink of Wales:

"I started a Box of Vegetables Thursday and the Station-master would not except them not as *Lugage* as they would not be delivered in London they were willing to take it by *Passinger* but I thought it would cost too much you could get it cheaper up there, but if you would like me to send you anything by *Passinger* I will do so if you will let me know. hope you are all right up there and keeping well. I hear some rather bad news of the Boming on the Wierless hope you are safe. I remain yours sincear."

Bad news of the Boming on the Wierless! I shall send him my large piece of glass. EVOE.



THE ROCK AND THE STORM



"Three hundred and seventy-six, three hundred and seventy-seven, three hundred and seventy-eight. Swastikas as plain as pikestaffs."

On the Water-Front

Gales, Buses and Bombs

HERE is a superstition that cannot, it seems, be shaken in this island. You might as well tell an Englishman that it is not really true that a swan can break a man's leg as attempt to persuade him that "the equinox" is no more subject to gales than any other period. Yet this, according to my Encyclopædia, is the dull and doughy truth:

"At the time of the equinox it is commonly believed that strong gales may be expected. *This popular idea has no foundation in fact*, for continued observations have failed to show any unusual prevalence of gales at this season. In one case observations taken for fifty years show that during the five days from March 21st to 25th, and from September 21st to 25th, there were fewer gales and storms than during the preceding and succeeding five days."

What a shame! What a shame, I

mean, to jump so heavily upon this innocent and "popular idea"! How can we begin with the same zest the good old song about the Mermaid:

"'Twas in the broad Atlantic, in the equinoctial gales,
That a young feller fell overboard among
the sharks and whales . . ."

And this is no "new-fangled" nonsense. It goes back, according to my dictionary, at least to the sixteenth century:

"1549. *Compt. Scot.* vi. Quehen ther multipleis ane grit numir of sternis in the equinoctial of Libra . . . at that time ther occurris grit tempestis."

"1795. *Ld. Lyndhurst Let.*: 'Many vessels have lost their anchors in this, I may call it, equinoctial gale.'"

"1811. *Wellington*: Till the equinoctial gales have filled the Tagus."

"1865. *Livingstone*: And the equinoctial gales made it impossible for us to cross to the eastern side."

So if we err, you see, we err in good company.

And maybe, in spite of these darned superior scientific fellows, we are right all the time. I, at least, shall insist on believing that there are special gales about the autumnal equinox, benevolently designed to prevent invasions.

* * * * *

Kind things have been said (and rightly) about the veteran pleasure-steamers which are now providing a makeshift but valuable passenger service over certain sections of the tidal Thames; kind things too, though sometimes jocular, about those of us who for many years have said that the Thames should be used to carry the

citizens to and from their work. But let no one suppose that we find ourselves wholly amused and triumphant. It is always amusing, if nothing more, to say "I told you so." We said that in war, at least, you would have to use the Thames: and now it is so. We are amused. We were especially amused, calling by chance at Westminster Pier one morning on our way to dockland, to find an official of the London Passenger Transport Board chalking up upon Queen Boadicea's pedestal: "*This way for the boats*"; for our dear old L.P.T.B. has always steadfastly refused to have any truck with passenger transport by boat. We were still more amused to read that "the Minister of Transport is providing the service": for no Minister of Transport has ever done more than give our hare-brained schemes a somewhat anæmic smile of encouragement. But we are not "triumphant." Nor do we agree with the very friendly writer in *The Times* who said that the "water-bus dream" had come true. Ferdinand de Lesseps, we imagine, would not have felt triumphant if they had let him build a canal only half-way to Suez, half the size he suggested, and not all of it navigable. We said that if you were going to use the Thames (as you would have to), you must make preparations, build modern craft and multiply landing-places by two or three. This was not done. It was not even done when war approached and arrived, though "they" were well and truly reminded. The same sort of reasons that have now produced a service between Westminster and Woolwich may soon demand a service between Westminster and Putney and Hammersmith. But there are still no landing-places at Putney or Hammersmith. Early in the war the building of a pier at Putney was actually sanctioned (as a war-measure) by the Minister of Transport. It was not built. It was not begun. Not one pile of such a pier exists. Why not? Because a certain authority did not think that it was likely to be useful enough to justify the expense. No name, no pack-drill, for the present. But, my hat, if anyone thinks that what is being bravely done now with poor resources is anything like what might and should have been done in a thorough way; if anyone thinks that we are either amused or triumphant, then let him think again.

* * * * *

It is odd, and wrong no doubt, that the nearness of death can be funny: but it can.

For once we were on patrol near our own home waters. It was a Sunday;

it was almost the end of a rather boring "Red"; and we thought we would call at a certain sailing-club (of which, in happier days, we used to see a lot) and inspect, and perhaps fortify the morale of the yachtsmen. Also, we thought they might be pleased to see the old ship, stained and grimed from stem to ensign with the honourable oil and smoke of dockland. There did not seem to be the usual signs of life about the club—no one varnishing, painting, scrubbing, or even gazing at the sky. No doubt the members were dutifully below ground, or possibly fortifying their morale above. So we nosed in and told our mate to pick up the nearest of the club buoys. There was not much water, but the tide was making, and by the time we left there would be more. As our gallant mate picked up the buoy we noticed that one of the club flags, the famous red burgee, was attached. One of the mark-buoys used for racing perhaps. We stopped the engines and surveyed the familiar scene. There, in spite of enemy attentions, was the familiar scene as usual, very good to see on this sunny morning after long voyaging elsewhere. There was even a hospital apparently intact. We felt rather cock-a-hoop: and had we not just seen an enemy machine come down? And some way astern of us, on the bank, was old Mr. Bole who built the ship, gazing with wonder at her war-costume.

"HULLO, FRANK!" we yelled through



"It's all right; it's all right. It's only an air-raid!"

our megaphone, "HOW ARE YOU?" and we put the small end of the instrument to our ear, to hear how Frank was.

Few forms of communication are so tiresome as conversation by megaphone, especially if one of the parties has no megaphone and is down-wind. Frank's reply seemed to finish with something like "Just where you are." It did not seem a good answer to the question; but we pretended to have heard perfectly, as the custom is; we said "That's the stuff!" and laughed in a cheery manner.

Then we said "DID YOU HEAR THE NEWS?" referring to the 175-30 score, which had just come through on the wireless.

Frank seemed to reply "It's a fine day where you are."

We did not wish to be dragged into the weather on the megaphone, so we said, pointing eastward "DID YOU SEE THAT ONE COME DOWN?"

"Yes," said Frank—or so we thought. "Just where you are."

We formed the opinion that poor old Frank had gone mad; for the aeroplane had fallen at least five miles to the eastward.

"WHERE?" we yelled, challengingly.

"Just where you are!" said Frank.

"WHAT?" we cried.

Frank, who hitherto had been as calm and casual as usual, at last showed signs of excitement. He put his hands to his mouth and shouted.

"A DAY!"

"Heavens!" we thought. "Poor Frank is raving."

Then an appalling possibility occurred to us.

"DID YOU SAY A D.A.?" we cried.

"YES!" said Frank. "THE CLUB'S EVACUATED." And he then again used his favourite phrase, "JUST WHERE YOU ARE!"

Heavens! A delayed-action bomb. Perhaps eight foot long and weighing a ton, like the one at St. Paul's. And not merely was it "just where we were," but we had picked up the buoy which marked the monster.

"Cast off!" we cried in horror to our mate, and dived below to start the engines. But getting away was not so easy, for, as we have said, there was not much water. Our propellers could not be far from the missile; we had to go astern and, when going astern, we caused so much vibration that we feared our manoeuvres must explode the brute. But we will not prolong the agony. We did get away; and here we are. What has happened to the bomb we do not know.

"But it only shows," as Nanny used to say, "how careful one should be."

A. P. H.

Immobilization

HAVE you realized that the very first thing the invaders will make for is your car, and that the second thing is your bicycle?

I dare say.

That is not good enough. Besides, what do you mean?

I mean that the invaders don't realize how difficult it is to start the car, nor the extreme old age of the bicycle.

That is the very reason why they will make straight for them.

Touché.

Very well. Then tell me what you are doing in order to keep the car, and the bicycle, out of their reach—both at home and abroad.

I do not think this is a good time for going abroad.

You are misunderstanding me willfully. By abroad, I mean any place outside the village but inside our Island Fortress.

At home I have arranged to lock the doors of the garage and put the key under the bowl marked DOG outside the door of the greenhouse at the bottom of the kitchen-garden. The procedure is that anyone getting out the car goes to the bowl marked DOG and, if the dog has not moved the bowl as he sometimes does just for fun, there is the key. If he *has* moved the bowl, the key is still there as a rule, although once it had quite disappeared and was never seen again. It was thought that the dog had swallowed it. He did not, however, suffer any ill-effects.

Go on about your car.

There is a good deal to be explained first. After unlocking the garage and getting inside it, there is the ignition-key, to be taken from a small flower-pot holding screws, that has stood for many years on the window-sill of the garage, which was once a coach-house. When the ignition-key is in place, and also the driver, the next task is to start the car.

This pool-petrol isn't—

What a cliché! I am surprised. Nor is it always the whole truth, as regards my car. It very often turns out that some other member of my household, in order to make assurance doubly sure—as I believe Shakespeare said in some other connection—has taken away the distributor. So that one's efforts may be quite wasted, until it occurs to one to go and look inside the bonnet for this distributor-affair.

What happens if it is not there?

Obviously, nothing.

Let me put it another way. What do you do next?

I am so glad that you do not ask me what I *say* next. What I do is to look at a calendar, sent last Christmas but three by the corn-and-seed man, with a rather charming view of hens in a coop, surrounded by ox-eyed daisies. On that calendar, the person who removed the distributor is supposed to have made a note of the place in which he has hidden it.

Excellent indeed. But might not this information fall into the hands of the enemy and thus play Hitler's game—which in this case would be Hide-and-Seek—for him?

No, because the person removing the distributor, although quite meaning to conceal it on the roof of the rabbit-hutch, under the dining-room clock, or behind the pig-bucket at the back door, invariably slips it into his pocket and forgets to take it out again.

What happens then?

One decides that it will really be better for one to bicycle up to the village after all, and one locks up the garage, replacing the key under the bowl marked DOG at the bottom of the kitchen-garden and then taking it out again on remembering that the bicycle is in the tool-house, and that the tool-house can only be reached through the garage. One therefore returns to the garage, opens it, goes through to the tool-house door and tries to remember where it was last decided to hide the key of the tool-house.

And does one?

Yes, after a time. Sometimes, how-

ever, some patriot has decided that the top of the cellar stairs is the very spot that the invaders would go to first of all to look for keys, and that the hiding-place had better be changed. The key of the tool-house, therefore, may be practically anywhere. The best plan is to wait till tea-time, when most people are back from their Committees, their air-raid practices, and their First-Aid lectures, and then ask if anyone has hidden the key of the tool-house, and if so, where.

With what result?

The majority of those present say that they remember seeing the key of the tool-house yesterday, although they cannot exactly recollect *where*. There is also at least one person who invariably inquires whether, after this disappointing effort to get into the tool-house and find one's bicycle, one remembered to lock up the garage again.

Perhaps you would prefer me not to press the point as to whether one did or not. Tell me instead what finally happens as to the bicycle?

The youngest member of the household says that it is perfectly easy to get into the tool-house anyway through the window of the old apple-room, and that she knows of a way by which the bicycle can quite well be pushed up through the trap-door.

It is to be hoped that the invader is not equally ingenious. Otherwise—

I know what you are going to say: that we are playing Hitler's game—in this case a combination of Blind Man's Buff and Snakes and Ladders—for him. But, as it happens, you are entirely mistaken. The bicycle, in all probability, is not in the tool-house at all. It is, on the contrary, up at the rectory where one left it after the Happy Afternoon for the Evacuees on being offered an unexpected lift home. It is impossible, in war-time, to remember every little thing.

So it seems.

Besides, we have decided that it will be simpler just to deflate all the tyres of the car, and also those of the bicycle, and blow them all up again every time we want to use them. It will save time.

E. M. D.



"Two Spitfires, and charge to Puffton Parva."

The Rivals

LOWER Fiddle has a crater,
Upper Fiddle boasts of three;
But OUR Fiddle (which is Middle)
CAUGHT A HEINKEL IN A TREE.

WAR'S HUMANIZING INFLUENCE

THE SHELTER TRENCH



First hour



Second hour



Third hour



Fourth and following hours



"I hear that the two they dropped last night were post-dated."

Further Notes on Life in Manchester

(From Our Own Correspondent)

MANCHESTER, Monday

NOT less than fifteen days ago (and yah to Gabby Goëbbels, Ole Man Ribbentrop and others with their eye on the weather reports) we had been having a good deal of rain, and your observant correspondent reached certain conclusions about rain in Manchester. It makes many of the pavements more slippery than it does in London, as I have hinted before, and in some districts it accumulates in puddles of a size and grandeur unequalled in my experience; but the natives seem to be impervious to it. Time and again I have seen men walking along in a shower, without coats, many of them carrying rolled umbrellas, quite untroubled by the rain and apparently not even getting wet.

There is possibly an understanding between the people of Manchester and their weather, which they do indeed regard with pride and affection. Rain itself they call "Manchester mist," but after an hour of assorted meteorological phenomena, "This is real Manchester weather," they will say complacently.

On the other hand they are very proud when they have good weather: a day of sun will fill them with a desire to correct their city's bad weather reputation. Thus the Manchester native is in the happy position of being pleased with *any* weather; which is more than can be said for your disgruntled correspondent (not less than fifteen days ago).

The seasons would appear to be earlier and, some of them,

considerably shorter in Manchester. It was on the evening of July 10th, when to be sure the weather had been very good for several weeks, that your startled correspondent heard one serious business man say to a friend "Well, we've had an amazing summer." Presumably we have since had a not particularly surprising autumn and were not less than fifteen days ago in the thick of a perfectly normal winter.

The best view of the Manchester sky, from which so much falls, is to be had (I think) from the top of a small hill in Heaton Park, the largest park in the district. This small hill also commands part of a golf-course with interesting acoustics. In damp weather nobody goes to Heaton Park at all except your persevering correspondent and golfers making for this course or leaving it to have some tea; but in fine weather the hill is speckled with supine humanity. On a sunny afternoon not less than more than fifteen days ago your correspondent, choosing, I admit, the most bristly quarter of his horizon, was able to count in that quarter or segment one hundred and eighty-four factory chimneys. This is what sunny afternoons in Manchester have to put up with.

Piccadilly in Manchester, though shorter than Piccadilly in London, is far more distinctively scented. It is pungent with pot-pourri (SCENTS CLOTHES, KILLS MOTHS, 2d. BAG), which is displayed in trays by many of the sellers standing beside the pavement. One or two of these sellers are obviously immigrants from the south ("Lydie sore gentlemen severeewun guaranteed waterproof"), but most are equally obviously ("Currier bugs! Currier bugs!") not.

Another interesting commercial announcement your correspondent recently saw chalked on a board:

PLAYING CARDS 8d. PER PACK
COLD HAKE 3d.

There seems to be a Manchester for vegetables to come in groups. The notice on all fish-and-chip shops here is not, as in the south, merely "Fish and Chips," but "Fish, Chips, Peas, Beans"; and many shops have an additional notice implying that these four items are inseparable. Perhaps it is for the same reason, if any, that whenever your correspondent has ordered spinach he has found, lurking at the bottom of the heap, either an odd pea, an odd piece of braised celery, or an odd wedge of carrot.

In this note also, probably, belongs a mention of some fruit your correspondent had for lunch at an hotel in a pleasant suburb of Manchester whither he walked one Sunday a week or two ago. With no more than the usual misgivings he ordered "Compôte of Fruit."

"Prunes figs and apples, will that be all right for you," the waitress said in a flat tone without the slightest questioning inflection.

"All right," I said, after thought.

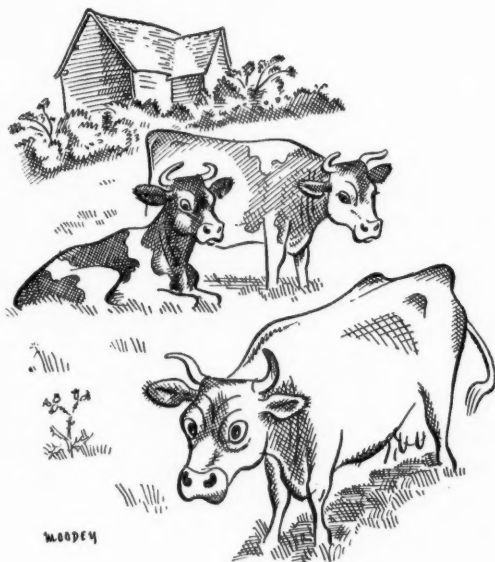
"Well you won't have that you'll just have the prunes and apples, because they're not nice the figs," she went on in the same tone.

I still said it was all right.

"Prunes and apples," she went away muttering, incredulously.

A day or two later the place, though not the hotel, was bombed. I just mention this.

R. M.



"Florrie's never been quite the same since that night she challenged the Home Guard."

Shabby Street

WHEN I heard that East London had been bombed I felt that I ought to go and see my friend Catchsole, who is the curate of St. Pontefract, Poplar. I used to help him with his Boys' Club at one time. "I like to see you with the boys, Conkleshill," he said, "because the really superlative way they take a mike out of you makes me feel that, in comparison, I am a highly respected figure." So when I heard about the raids I took a bus to East London and then walked to the Vicarage. Catchsole was out, so I walked round and looked at some of the damage. Strange, isn't it, how much angrier it makes one to see the wreck of a little house, than the destruction of a vast pile of office buildings that has cost a hundred times as much to build? Shabby Street had got it badly. Where three houses had been there was just a pile of odd bricks and part of an old Windsor chair.

"That's old Mr. Tumbil's chair," said a woman who was standing by—"used to sit in it outside his house on summer evenings."

"Dead?" I said.

The woman laughed.

"I reckon it'd take more than a bomb to kill old Mr. Tumbil," she said. "He was blown right out of his Anderson through the window of the sweet-shop opposite. When we got him out he was pulling toffees out of his hair and swearing something dreadful, and him a steady church-going man all his days. Them in the Andersons was all saved. But Mrs. Gammet at 24 stayed in her bed. Said she wasn't going to change her habits at her age (eighty-three she was), not for Hitler nor nobody. She was so stone deaf she could hear neither siren nor bombs, and she said when the Lord wanted her He would 'ave her."

"Dead?" I asked.

"What do you s'pose?" said the woman.

Further along Shabby Street I had a pleasant surprise. A young soldier came up and said "Surely it's Mr. Conkleshill? Don't you remember Fred Smith? Fellow who put the eel in your sleeping-bag at the Summer Camp in 1937? I'm home on leave. You can stay to dinner if you like, though it'll be a bit late, because there's no gas and Ma hasn't used the kitchener for years . . ."

He took me into the house. The windows of the best parlour (which was also by night, of course, a bedroom) were broken, and a heavy piece of roadway had made a gap in the ceiling, but Fred Smith's father was sitting in his usual chair, smoking his usual pipe, and reading the Sunday paper. He eyed me suspiciously as I entered.

"This is Mr. Conkleshill," said Fred.

Mr. Smith seemed unimpressed.

"If you're one of them noospaper Johnnies," he said, "you're wasting your time. I ain't talking. Prime fool I should look in the papers as an 'ero. You're the fourth since I got up, and gawd knows how many there were afore that. What if I did pull 'im out? What would you 'ave expected me to do, push 'im furrer into the daybreeze?"

I told him I was not a reporter, and hastily withdrew. I walked out into the backyard, trying not to hear the comments that Mrs. Smith was making as she inspected the slow progress of the joint in the unfamiliar oven of the kitchener. A smart enamelled gas-stove, cold as civilization, seemed to sneer at her toil and exult in its gaslessness.

In the yard were two little girls and a little boy. They seemed to imagine from my appearance that I was easy game, and ran towards me.

"Play air-raids wiv us, Mister," they chorused, "Jimmy's a Neinkel and Mary's a Nurricane and I'm a 'elpless civilyun."

"What shall I be?" I asked.

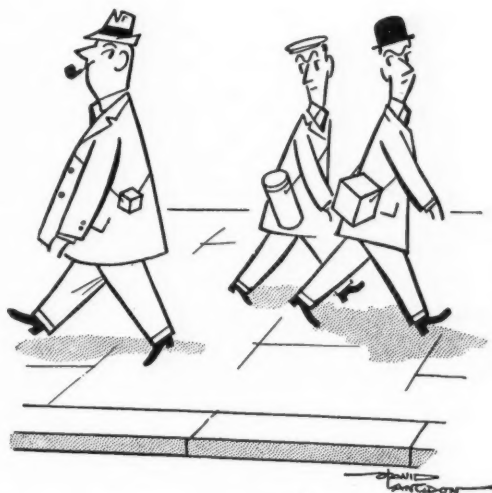
She weighed me up with an appraising glance.

"You better," she said, "just be the siren for a start."

"R.A.F. HAMPER INVASION PLANS"

Headline in *The Times*.

Probably our answer to the Molotoff Bread-Basket.





"Ab, me—the number of stones I've swallowed so's to marry a sailor!"

Everybody's Doing It.

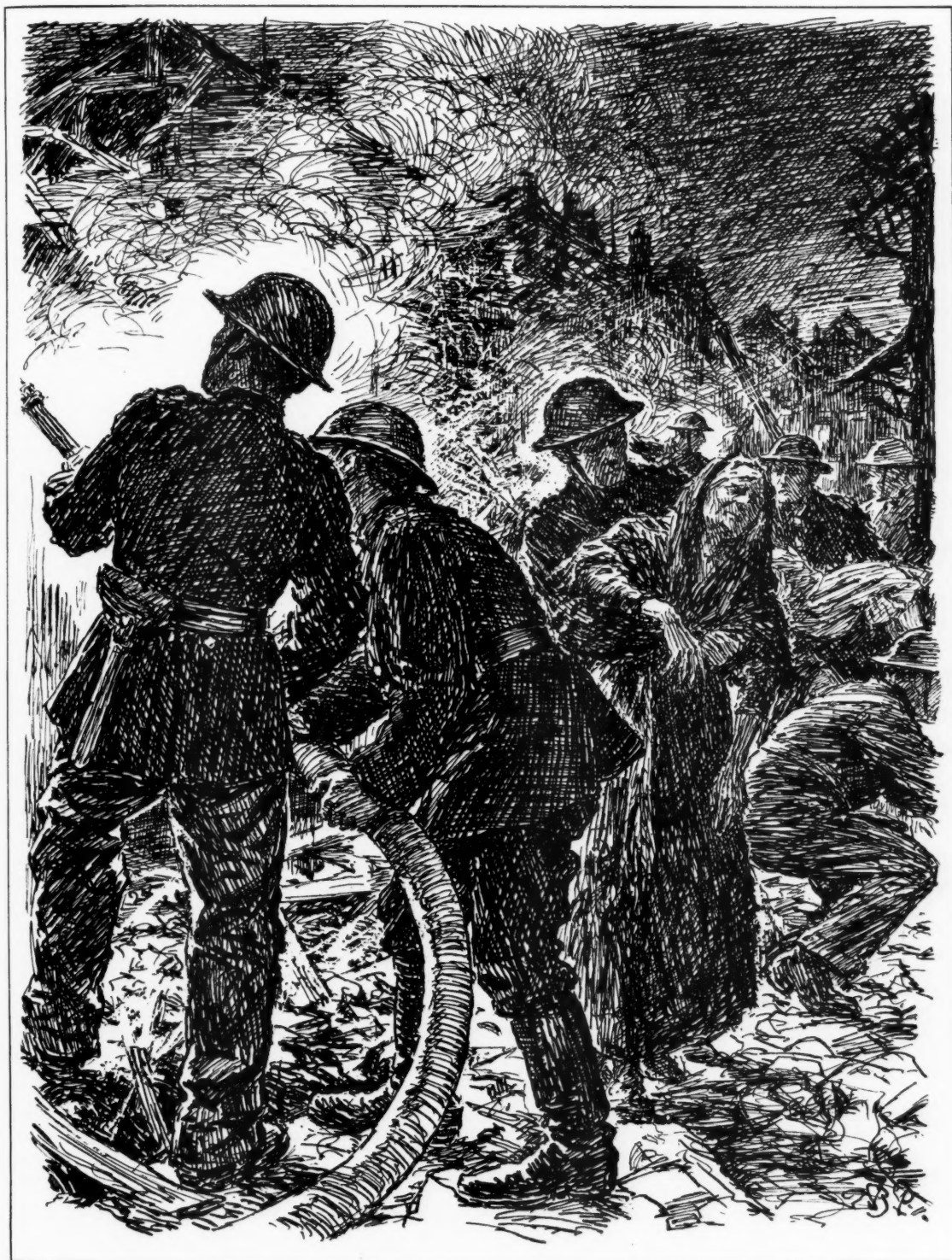
WE're all buying Spitfires
 As fast as we can buy
 Spitfires and Hurricanes
 For battles in the sky . . .
 The girls whose names are this or that,
 The folk who keep a dog or cat,
 The darts clubs and the foxhound packs,
 The chimney-sweeps and steeplejacks,
 The men who work in mine or mill,
 Who milk our cows, our fields who till,
 The rich and poor, the great and small,
 The towns and counties one and all—
 They're all buying Spitfires
 (Hurricanes and Spitfires)
 As fast as they can buy.

They're all buying Spitfires,
 The people near and far,

Hurricanes and Spitfires
 To help to win the war . . .
 In Port of Spain and Singapore,
 And Chequerbent and Cockey Moor,
 In Burma, Bluff and Table Bay,
 And tiny islands far away,
 In Durban, Malta and Fiji,
 From John o' Groats to Tasman Sea,
 In all the ends of all the earth
 They're writing cheques for all they're worth—
 And they're all buying Spitfires
 (Hurricanes and Spitfires)
 To help to win the war . . .

They're all buying fighters,
 And as soon as they have done
 They'll all be buying bombers
 To go and bust the Hun. . . .

C. F. S.



THE FRONT LINE



Mr. PUNCH'S HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND

OWING to the merciless barbarity of the enemy, and his indiscriminate attacks by air on residential districts in London and many other towns, the number of civilian casualties in this country is now considerable, and we desire to extend the operation of our Hospital Comforts Fund to the provision of any medical and surgical supplies that may help to alleviate the distress of these.

At the same time it must not be forgotten that the Air Force fighting the "Battle of Britain," the Navy patrolling the seas, the crews of our minesweepers, the men at searchlight posts and anti-aircraft stations, are in need of extra comforts such as Balacava helmets, sea-boot stockings, gloves, mittens and woollen waistcoats, and in a few months the need will be greater still.

Mr. Punch, in expressing his very sincere gratitude for the generous help given by subscribers to his Comforts Fund, would like to suggest that Working Parties wishing to continue their fine effort should consider how great will be the advantage of having plenty of supplies available before the hard weather of winter sets in.

Though we know well that these are days of privation and self-denial for all, we yet ask you, those who can, to send donations NOW, large or small, according to your means, to PUNCH HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4, in order that every man shall be assured of warmth and comfort.

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, September 17th.—House of Lords: Statement on the War by Lord Caldecote. Secret Session on Future Parliamentary Arrangements.

House of Commons: War Statement by Mr. Winston Churchill. Secret Session on Arrangements.

Wednesday, September 18th.—House of Lords: Discussion on British Propaganda Abroad. Secret Session on Air Raids.

House of Commons: Secret Session on Air Raids.

Thursday, September 19th.—House of Commons: Secret Session on Air Raids (continued).

Tuesday, September 17th.—It is, doubtless, appropriate that a democratically-elected body like the House of Commons should look somewhat shamefaced when it goes into secret session. And that certainly accounts for the rosy blush that suffused the face of the PRIME MINISTER when, apparently in the middle of a speech, he "spied strangers" and drove from the Chamber even your humble scribe.

As a matter of record it was his second blush of the day. Of the other, more anon.



THE OLD LADY WHOSE FLESH CREEPS

"Newspaper people give me a sort of creepy feeling."—Lord Addison.

In the Lords the same procedure was being followed at the behest of Lord CALDECOTE, who *never* blushes.

Before the impenetrable veil of

secrecy descended, his Lordship proudly told the Upper House that he had heard no complaints about the conditions in which we were all living and working. In London, in a week, rescue parties had turned out 169 times and had saved 216 lives.

The Archbishop of CANTERBURY, whose age-old traditional home is in the midst of one of the hard-hit areas, was given a sympathetic cheer as he told how 200 bereaved men, women and children were nightly seeking the sanctuary of his chapel crypt against the pagan attackers from the air.

Mr. CHURCHILL's first blush of the day—a good healthy ruddy one it was too—came when Mr. A. V. ALEXANDER, First Lord of the Admiralty, announced the renaming of the destroyers made over to us by the United States Government. Mr. ALEXANDER openly hero-worships the P.M., and it was with a considerable flourish that he announced: "The Leader—CHURCHILL."

What used to be called loud and prolonged cheers. The original owner of the name slid down in his seat, head on chest, to cover his embarrassment, but in response to cries he "held his head up"—to reveal an ear-to-ear grin as well as the blush.

The other destroyers are to be called: *Caldwell, Cameron, Castleton, Chelsea, Chesterfield, Clare and Campbelltown*. All are of towns common to both Britain and the United States.

In his war statement Mr. CHURCHILL remarked, a thought wistfully, that the state of being keyed up to highest pitch day after day had lost its first charm of novelty. He might have added that the wail of the sirens, just then floating in through the windows, had also lost that endearing quality.

Those very windows, by the way, had a novelty of their own, for the familiar stained glass had given way to plain, rather dusty-looking, glass. The hidden lighting in the roof stood out naked and glaring, for the glass screen had also gone to a place of greater security.

The PRIME MINISTER found in the R.A.F.'s destruction of 185 German warplanes in a single day (Sunday, September 15th) "reason for sober and increasing confidence." The main German attacks on London were in the hope of terrorizing the inhabitants into submission and into pressing the Government to make peace.

Mr. CHURCHILL's massive jaw stuck out as he declared sturdily that the ruse would not succeed. A roar of cheers confirmed his view.

Another big mistake Messrs. HITLER, GOERING, RIBBENTROP and Company

had made was the attack on "our beloved KING and QUEEN"—Buckingham Palace had been bombed three times in as many days. This attack



"THE DESTROYERS"

"The strength of twice three thousand horse

That serve the one command."

Kipling.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY

only united the Royal Family more closely with the nation in new and sacred bonds.

"And," the Premier added, his chin jutting out again, "this will increase our determination to carry on an unrelenting prosecution of the war against so foul a foe!"

Just *how* foul a foe he proceeded to elaborate by announcing that, in a fortnight, the gallant *Luftwaffe* had killed 2,000 civilians and injured another 8,000, while the casualties in the fighting forces had been a mere 250. Even these bitter blows, however, had not made any serious difference to our war effort. And we were making "grievous inroads" on the German air superiority.

So far, a sombre, even macabre, statement. But the PRIME MINISTER cannot make a speech entirely devoid of the lighter touch. He coined the name "Jim Crows" for the new rooftop watchers against air-raids.

Then—"casting his eye around," he spied strangers.

The Attorney-General (Sir DONALD SOMERVELL), with a fine sense of the dramatic and perhaps an unnecessary warning to the Fourth Estate, asked



"Just look at that dog-fight, Mr. Bellamy!"

for and got leave for the Clerk of the House to give evidence in a police court against someone alleged to have spilled the beans about an earlier secret session.

Wednesday, September 18th.—Their Lordships heard Lord ADDISON urge that more should be made abroad of the British case by means of better propaganda. He made the now seemingly inevitable suggestion that Lord BEAVERBROOK should become Minister of Propaganda. Newspapermen, said Lord ADDISON, with an uneasy side-long glance at the Press Gallery, always gave him a creepy feeling—perhaps because he knew nothing of their world. But when it came to presenting a case to the best advantage they were the people to do the trick.

Lord SIMON, rising from the Wool-sack, promised to convey to "the proper quarter" the suggestion about the future of Lord BEAVERBROOK. Presumably to Lord BEAVERBROOK?

Mr. ATTLEE, whose rather professorial manner riles the House with

curious consistency, was in trouble in the Commons about a committee of Civil Servants and Service chiefs who select recipients of war honours and decorations. It was not so much what he said, apparently, as the "nasty way he said it." However, he survived to move (without the slightest sign of a blush) a second secret session, this time about raids, shelters, feeding and whatnot.

Thursday, September 19th.—There was a big cheer when Mr. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, fresh back from illness, made his appearance in the Commons. He bowed his acknowledgments to both sides of the House.

Sir JOHN ANDERSON, normally the most urbane of Ministers, showed a new snappiness in reply to questioners. He said there were 750,000 files relating to aliens, and expressed the view that an occasional mislaying of one of them was not a matter for intense astonishment.

Mr. ATTLEE got into another minor *blitzkrieg*, this time because he was judged to have snorted at a suggestion

that the PRIME MINISTER's big speeches should be broadcast.

Pertinacious Mr. GEOFFREY MANDER wanted the Government to make biscuits as an iron ration for civilians, but the idea did not seem to go down very well, especially as some of the M.P.s had missed their early meals through the activities of the King's enemies.

Mr. ATTLEE having moved the customary motion resolving the House into secret session, everybody went out, just as Mr. WILL THORNE was complaining to Mr. ROBERT BOOTHBY, of the Food Ministry, that he had been unable to get "even a small glass of milk." We shall never know how that earth-shaking problem was solved—or even if it was.

"Australian black swans are among the birds that do well at Whipsnade Zoo . . . One pair this year brought off a brood of three goslings."—*Evening News*.

A divorce is anticipated.

The Army's Worst Form

THIS military habit of talking about army documents by numbers, asking a man for his A.B.64 at the pay-table and for his 178 at the Medical Inspection Room, has this intriguing quality. It makes conversation so difficult for those who do not speak the language that they have to learn it. Having done which, they try to outsmart one another until the game dies a natural death through loss of novelty.

"Can anyone tell me," said Harris at mess, "what is Army Form B.150?"

Nobody could, so he was able to tell us, which he did with his smuggest expression.

"I don't know who thought it up, but it is a Notice Prohibiting Spitting."

"That means you've got a catalogue," said Humphrey, sharply and in protest.

"Naturally."

"Lend it to me."

"I'd like to borrow that," said Goddard eagerly. "There ought to be some dashed good reading there."

But Harris knew he was on a good thing, and wouldn't lend it to anybody, so Humphrey and Goddard spent the morning trying to borrow a catalogue in various company offices so as to play a match at lunch on the lines of Happy Families.

"Harris, old boy," said Goddard then, slyly and with lifted eyebrows, "might I ask you, please, for Army Form 1373?"

"I am afraid I have not got one actually concealed about my person," was the answer. "But I wonder, have you a 1797?"

"No," interrupted Humphrey, "he hasn't; and I can't see the use of a 1797, because if you knew enough to complete the flaming thing the chap wouldn't be what he is."

This nettled Harris, who looked up tensely.

"What is a 1797?"

"A regimental deserter's route form, and if you knew enough to fill in his route for him . . ."

"Then what you should do with your 1797," said Humphrey, "is to enter it on a 1373. Which," he said, when nobody asked him the courteous question, "is a List of Documents Recommended for Destruction; and I should think there can be no Army Form in greater demand."

"I came across a nice little touch

this morning," submitted Harris. "1062—A Hastener, if you please, for the Supply of Ordnance Stores—most necessary in the present crisis, and a very pretty term; but they express themselves more clumsily in K.1324—'Tender for Boot Repairs.' The return I needed after this morning's route march was Tender *After* Boot Repairs, feet, soldiers in possession of—and that I can't find."

"For my part I never realized," said Goddard, "that the War House so far connived at cheating as to provide you with a special kind of envelope to send faked results in. But

B 2062 is an envelope, believe it or not, Addressed to the War Office, to hold Worked Examination Papers."

Then up spoke the senior company commander in a small voice which closed the conversation.

"For subtle wastefulness and significant inanity," he said, "the worst form in the Army is B.199b. You need look no farther."

I asked him what this was, and he gave me a grateful glance.

"Instructions for completing Army Form B.199a—as if they couldn't have put those on the same bit of paper."



"And those of course are ours!"



"If it wasn't for the news and sirens and guns and things you'd hardly know there was a war on."

Bent Double—March!

IT is a terrible thing to have rheumatism in the Army. That is, it is a terrible thing to be in the Army and to have rheumatism, especially in the back. (Or lumbago, for that matter, which seems to be the same thing but lower down.)

I am an officer now, but once I was third from the left in the rear rank, and it was while occupying this somewhat humble though useful position that I found myself in another—far humbler and entirely useless. Having performed, one fine morning, the series of rites known as squad-drill-with-arms, the time had come to lay them down and do a little squad-drill without arms.

"Ground—Arms!" said the sergeant-instructor, and as one man the squad bent smartly down and laid its rifles on the ground, bolt upwards and the outer band beside the right toe, counted a pause and, taking the time

from the right-hand man, stood smartly up. But not as one man. The third man from the left of the rear rank remained, torso horizontal, still gripping his rifle and gazing fixedly at the ground. Even the hypnotic power of the eye of Sergeant Throgmorton beating fiercely down on the back of my neck was powerless to raise me. As though it were but yesterday I still remember the hideousness of it. At last Sergeant Throgmorton, being convinced, if not that I was unable to rise, at least that I did not intend to do so, ordered me to fall out. Proceeding by dead reckoning and a sense of smell, and striving to convey to those who saw me the impression that I was engaged in an experiment to discover a method of grounding arms while on the march, I traversed the square and eventually gained the shelter of my barrack-room.

The incident passed off all right in

the end, and I did not so suffer again until yesterday. Yesterday morning, as soon as I attempted to spring lightly from my little bed I knew that I was once more in the relentless grip of the torture that comes and goes midway between the right shoulder-blade and the sacro-iliac. With many heart-rending wheezings and groanings, which greatly alarmed my brother officers, I rose and addressed myself to the business of the day. Naturally, I would not succumb. I would not go sick. Duty, and all that. As a matter of fact, and if the truth be told, it was not so much the call of duty that caused me to set my teeth and struggle on as the suspicion that I might be sent away to the depot, where the fishing is not nearly as good as it is here.

Of course everything turned out wrong. During the morning I found myself standing on the square and

casting a fatherly eye on the drilling of my company, when I became aware of something unusual behind me. A furtive and painful glance over my shoulder revealed to me the distasteful fact that I was in the presence of the Colonel, the Adjutant, the Regimental Sergeant Major, an unknown General and a few assorted officers of the Staff. I was aware, moreover, that interest was focused on my company, and greatly feared that it would shortly shift to me. It did. As the company commander concerned, I was noticed by the Colonel, who summoned me. I approached. I halted. I saluted. As I did so I felt as though I had been stabbed in the back and involuntarily emitted a loud wheezing noise which appeared to startle the General somewhat. He made no remark, however, and on being told who I was, invited me to take command of my company and give a demonstration of what we could do. By way of acknowledgment I bowed smartly from the hips. After a short but agonizing pause I contrived to stand upright again, salute with a hollow groan, turn about and march away. As I moved off I thought I heard the Colonel say something to the General about regimental customs.

Half-way across the square it happened again, but this time I had the presence of mind to drop my stick, hoping thereby to give the impression that I was only stooping to pick it up. With a sensation as of knives in the back, and beaded brow, I addressed the company. My first word of command, consisting of a sort of stricken cough which developed into a noise as of air being expelled from a football, produced no effect, and I fancied that I could hear the General asking if this were another regimental custom. Inspiration came suddenly to my rescue and I ordered loudly, "Ground—

Arms!" Down they went and up they came. I personally, by a superhuman effort, remained erect. I then told them that their performance was slovenly, unsoldierly and altogether lacking in the elements of military neatness and precision, after which I announced that we would now do it by numbers and that they were to take the time from me. This time, therefore, praying fervently that such a performance would not strike the General as eccentric, I stooped briskly with the men. It was some little time before I was able to give the order to straighten up again with any confidence of being able to obey it myself, but I hoped that this would make it seem all the more impressive to the onlookers.

By the time I had done this some half-dozen times, each time looking between my legs to see if they had got bored and gone away, and finding that they had not, I was beginning to think that soon they would find something monotonous in my display and invite me to essay something more advanced. Even as I was racking my brains for some manoeuvre that would look sufficiently military and yet not cast me into the depths of pain and humiliation there came a twinge and a wheeze and I knew that I was done for. I was stuck. Three long rows of silent men, bent double, gazed devoutly at the asphalt surface of the parade ground. The silence was broken only by the laboured breathing of their commander, who faced them in a similar position. It smacked of some sacred rite of Old Cathay.

After some minutes of this I realized that there was only one thing to be done, as the experience of the erstwhile third from the left of the rear rank came to my aid. Muttering an injunction to the men to hang on to their rifles, I gave the order "Move to

the left in threes—By the right—Quick—March!" And so, proceeding once more by dead reckoning and the sense of smell, I led my devoted band of braves across the square and so round the corner of the Sandhurst block and out of sight.

Just before we were mercifully hidden from view the Adjutant's voice was borne to me adown the breeze. He was speaking to the General and his words confirmed, and even strengthened, the high opinion of him that I already held.

"The new scouting drill, Sir," I heard him say.

The Middle Sea

OFF harbours where the triremes met
With clash of oar and brazen prow
Another scene of war is set
And other fleets are cruising now.

Past caves where sea-nymphs used to lie
Glides silently the submarine,
Destroyers swing at anchor by
The island of the Cyprian queen.

Where Dædalus first leapt in flight
The Skua and the Roc parade—
And all are seeking day and night
For Rome's unworthy renegade.

Locked in his azure prison sea
Calypso's wiles avail him naught,
He shall not always safely flee
Nor always find a friendly port.

"FRESH AIR BLOWS AT ITALIANS"
Manchester Evening Chronicle.

They need it.

CAFETERIA



"I just didn't fancy anything . . ."



"I wish to make a somewhat lengthy call to Auckland, New Zealand."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Waterton's Three Worlds

CHARLES WATERTON, squire, naturalist and ascetic, is a subject made to the biographer's hand. A Papist of the late eighteenth century, he survived the prep. that thwarted his intelligent and adventurous bent; and the Jesuits of Stonyhurst were, as he always maintained, the making of him. Their young naturalist subsequently proceeded to family connections in Guiana, thus establishing his lifelong bond between Yorkshire dales and primeval forest. And henceforth *The Squire of Walton Hall* (CASSELL, 15/-) is seen taming sloths and tiger-cats, comparing experiments in taxidermy with the dying (but equally enthusiastic) JOSEPH BANKS, walling his estate (like BECKFORD) to preserve his birds, marrying the seventeen-year-old wife to whom he pledged himself at her christening, and making the Grand Tour with his small son only to suffer shipwreck and the loss of a valuable relic and a Palmerston passport. To the last—when a window open to admit the cry of the cornerakes immediately preceded the last sacraments—the life is unaffectedly original and entirely consistent. It is Mr. PHILIP GOSSE's (and our own) good fortune that the charm of this harmony and its rich variations has been so admirably perceived and conveyed.

Granite Coast

The north-east coast of Scotland is the scene of Miss CATHERINE GAVIN's novel entitled—a little incompre-

hensibly—*The Hostile Shore* (METHUEN, 7/6). It is a dour, rugged and uncompromising sea-board and, like most such regions, it breeds a race which shares its natural characteristics. Kirsten Gordon, the fisherman's daughter and shepherd's widow who, as happens not infrequently in fiction, has somehow usurped the position of heroine obviously designed by the author for another character, possesses those qualities in full measure, and her terse and expressive Doric contrasts with the highbrow speech of Lenny, her novelist daughter, by no means to the advantage of the latter. There are many interesting glimpses of the old legends and traditions which still linger in this corner of Scotland, where the rather painfully "literary" conversation of Lenny and her lover Kai seem uncomfortably out of place among the thunder of the surf and the crying of the gulls.

Arms and a Boy

To Mr. UPTON SINCLAIR the art of fiction has always been a means rather than an end. He invents his story less for its own sake than to illustrate some phase of the social scheme. So it is with *World's End* (WERNER LAURIE, 10/6), of which the scene is mainly Europe and the time the 'teens of our century. Add that a leading character is a maker of armaments and that a third part of the action takes place in Conference Paris, and the object and nature of the attack will be sufficiently indicated. Yet to call this a novel with a purpose would be to misrepresent it. If knavery and stupidity are exhibited, criticism of them is kept implicit. Nor is public event allowed to overshadow private adventure, or the social import of that to diminish its personal significance. The progress of a charming and very intelligent American boy brought up on the Riviera, his relations with his friends, with his parents—the genial gunmaker and that *Beauty Budd* whose name so exactly describes her—and with the girls who excite his youthful ardour, these things make up a story to satisfy those who are shy of the political or the thesis novel. There is much excellent light comedy, many a brilliant picture of the ways of the leisured; there are emotions and excitements purely domestic. But the outstanding quality of the book resides in the nicety with which the smaller world and the larger are brought into intensifying interaction, and imagined and historical



"Go away! Go away! I'm on leave, blast you! On LEAVE!!"

characters are presented on the same plane of actuality.

Different Soldiering

No imperial Roman, but an unknown though not anonymous English soldier, is the self-revealing hero of Mr. ROBERT GRAVES's latest essay in historical recreation. *Sergeant Lamb of the Ninth* (METHUEN, 8/6) fought on the losing side in the war whence came the United States of America, and afterwards wrote down what he remembered of that portentous conflict. The rare volumes containing his narrative have been unearthed by Mr. GRAVES, who has used them with a poet's licence kept in scrupulous restraint by an historian's conscience. The result, whether LAMB or GRAVES, has the sober verisimilitude of DEFOE, and, "though offered as fiction," makes an introduction as reliable as readable to events which profoundly and permanently affected the world's progression. But while the sergeant, as presented by Mr. GRAVES, shows a comprehension of the larger issues (of just why, for instance, the tea-chests were thrown into Boston harbour) and a critical judgment of politicians which must have been rare in one of his station and time, it is the details which he gives of an eighteenth-century soldier's life in barrack and camp, in transport-ship and battle, which will excite the liveliest attention. The account of his dealings with the Indian tribes is of peculiar interest, while a love-affair begun in Ireland and brought to its conclusion in America adds a pleasant touch of romantic relief to a story which is never deliberately romanticized. Sergeant LAMB lived rough among rough companions, but is himself a gentle and very likeable fellow.

A Scene of Clerical Life

It is worth while that Lady PECK should tell in *Bewildering Cares* (FABER, 7/6) simply and without romantic disguise the day by day history of one of the great band of the English "Clergy Wives." They have been laughed at, unkindly criticized, actively disliked, and some may have deserved these things, for it takes all kinds to make a class; but taking them by and large the vicarages of England—and that means the clergy wives who control them—have deserved well of their country. They are the quintessence of the great British middle class, of the mothers of many of our greatest men of peace and war. CAMILLA LACEY, with whom we meet the poor and the rich, attend sales of cakes and "quiet days" and descend to the kitchen to cook the Archdeacon's breakfast, is a dear—a kind, clever, human



THE FARMER AND THE NEW FARM-LABOURER



FIRST WEEK



SECOND WEEK



THIRD WEEK



FOURTH WEEK

W. Bird, September 25th, 1918

dear, and her husband and her delightful son are worthy of her. Altogether a lovable book; quite unaffectedly, in its presentation of CAMILLA's thoughts and her husband's teaching, a book which may help the faith in God of some whose need of faith is sore.

Onion Sauce

AMONG the numerous health fiends at large in the world there are quite a few who believe that there must be something wrong with a man if he feels sluggish in the morning. Some of them will assault his liver, if they are given a chance, others will malign his digestive organs, tear out his teeth, or tell him that his appendix is in a dangerous state. But the fact is that ninety-nine times out of a hundred there is nothing wrong with the poor wretch at all. His liver is good, his digestive organs are functioning with precision, and his teeth and his appendix are best left alone. He feels sluggish in the morning because he was built that way. His mind is like an internal combustion engine. It starts on the choke and runs best when it has had time to warm up.

The most appalling things can happen to a man when he starts fooling about with himself to stop himself feeling sluggish in the morning. He can throw his whole system out of tune, and bring the world he has built up so patiently tumbling about his ears. That is what happened to R. J. Wilkie when a man called Watkins persuaded him to begin eating raw onions.

R. J. Wilkie was a charges clerk in a wholesale hardware firm. He sat at a desk just inside a large glass door at his office, and whenever anybody ordered any hardware the counter clerk made out an invoice and passed it on for R. J. Wilkie to check. Every morning when the orders came in by post R. J. Wilkie would have a lot of invoices to check. He had two baskets on his desk, and as he checked the invoices he would put them in one or the other basket. The ones he wanted to pass were all placed in the left-hand basket and the ones he wanted to query were placed in the right-hand basket. When both baskets were full a girl would come from the dispatch-room and take them away. She would take the left-hand basket back to the dispatch-room and the right-hand basket through another glass door and put it on the desk of Mr. Toole, the Managing Director. R. J. Wilkie had been a charges clerk in this wholesale hardware firm for so long and had given such satisfaction that he had risen to be chief charges clerk, and was sometimes called into Mr. Toole's room when there was a particularly tricky query.

R. J. Wilkie had always felt sluggish

in the morning. It was his natural state. There was nothing wrong with him at all, and the fact that his mind refused to function properly until ten o'clock in the morning did not matter, for until the counter clerk had made out the invoices that came in by post it was impossible for R. J. Wilkie to check them. From nine until ten every morning he only had to tidy up his desk and light his pipe. Then he would sit with his head in his hands, summoning strength for the day's labour.

It has already been mentioned that R. J. Wilkie sat just inside a glass door, and that from his room another glass door led into the Managing Director's office. People who wanted to see Mr. Toole would generally wait in R. J. Wilkie's room, and would often pass the time of day with him. Among these visitors was this man Watkins, who was a traveller in galvanized baths, buckets and dolly-tubs. He was a smart sort of man who always had an appropriate remark for every occasion. He generally came to see Mr. Toole the first thing in the morning, and he never failed to describe himself to R. J. Wilkie as "the early bird." Whenever he found R. J. Wilkie sitting with his head in his hands, summoning strength, he would tell him that he was not his usual cheery self that morning, and would hint that something was wrong with him. R. J. Wilkie took no notice of this at first, but after a while he began to wonder whether there was something the matter with him that was making him so sluggish in the morning. One day he asked Watkins what he ought to do about it. Mr. Watkins looked straight into R. J. Wilkie's eyes.

"Have you ever eaten a raw onion?" he asked.

"Well, no," said R. J. Wilkie.

As soon as R. J. Wilkie admitted that he had never eaten a raw onion this man Watkins' face assumed a terrifying aspect. He became a tiger tensed for the spring, or a spider about to dart from its lair. For Mr. Watkins, although in normal circumstances a genial traveller in galvanized baths, buckets and dolly-tubs, was fanatically addicted to raw onions.

"Do you realize," he asked R. J. Wilkie, "that a single onion in its raw state is not only rich in potassium, calcium, iron, silicon and phosphorus, but also contains quantities of iodine and sulphur? This unique combination

of health-giving minerals is nature's own restorative. If only everyone would eat just two raw onions a day they would wake up every morning, as I do, feeling refreshed, invigorated, ready for every kind of mental and physical activity."

R. J. Wilkie raised his head from his hands. "Really?" he said. "How can an onion make all that difference?"

"Just listen to me," said Mr. Watkins. "You can go to any chemist and buy a bottle of mineral salts. You can buy bottles containing two, or even three salts. But you cannot buy a bottle containing all the salts contained in an onion in the same proportions. Only nature can produce them. And yet it has been proved over and over again that these simple minerals, acting in conjunction on the human system, tone up the digestive organs by stimulating the flow of the gastric juices, cleanse and purify the blood-stream, and finally penetrate to the cranium, where they accelerate the flow through the thousands of tiny veins around the brain cells and thus invigorate the mind."

Until his conversation with this man Watkins, R. J. Wilkie had been happily ignorant of the fact that there were thousands of tiny veins situated in the vicinity of his brain cells, and being thus ignorant he had never bothered about them. But during the next few days these thousands of tiny veins were always intruding, and the horrible thing was that whenever he pictured them they were so clogged up that he wondered his mind was able to function at all. This thought began to worry him, and worry accentuated the impression. Instead of feeling sluggish in the morning he found that he was feeling sluggish all day. The time had come, R. J. Wilkie thought, to clear those thousands of tiny veins and to invigorate his mind. On his way to the office one morning he bought a pound of raw onions, and while he was waiting for the counter clerk to bring him the invoices that had come by post he took out his pocket-knife, peeled the largest onion, and cut it into thin neat slices.

As soon as he had eaten four slices of raw onion R. J. Wilkie believed that he could feel the minerals beginning to act. His gastric juices appeared to be flowing at an increased rate, his blood-stream seemed to be quickened, and R. J. Wilkie fancied that he could detect a tingling sensation as the

potassium, calcium, iron, silicon, phosphorus, iodine and sulphur started to act upon the thousands of tiny veins around the brain cells. R. J. Wilkie breathed a sigh of relief. His brain was invigorated and he felt ready for anything. At that moment the counter clerk deposited his pile of invoices on R. J. Wilkie's desk.

An hour later R. J. Wilkie sat back and breathed again. His invigorated mind had disposed of the invoices and they lay in neat piles in their respective baskets. In a few minutes the girl came from the dispatch-room and removed them. R. J. Wilkie felt that his experiment with raw onion had already proved a success. The thousands of tiny veins around his brain cells had already ceased to trouble him, and the world had become a brighter place. It struck him that while he had a moment to spare he had better eat the rest of the onion slices, and as soon as he thought of this, R. J. Wilkie's heart began to pound and there was a sudden deterioration of the condition of his digestive organs. For he remembered that he had placed the slices of raw onion in the right-hand basket, and that this basket now reposed on the desk of Mr. Toole, the Managing Director.

At a moment like this, R. J. Wilkie reflected, a man who had allowed the thousands of tiny veins round the brain cells to become clogged would have been lost. He would have sat at his desk, numbed and stupefied, until Mr. Toole discovered the onion slices and came to punish the offender. But R. J. Wilkie's mind was invigorated still. He realized at once that he would have to recover the onion slices from Mr. Toole's desk before they were discovered. He rose from his chair and looked through the glass door leading into the Managing Director's room. Mr. Toole was reading the paper and R. J. Wilkie's basket was still intact.

Had R. J. Wilkie's mind not been invigorated he would have headed straight for disaster. He would have knocked at Mr. Toole's door, gone in, and made some excuse to engage Mr. Toole in conversation while he recovered the basket. Indeed, R. J. Wilkie's right hand was raised to knock, when his invigorated mind warned him that if he took this course Mr. Toole would realize immediately that something was wrong, and would examine the basket before R. J. Wilkie could remove it. R. J. Wilkie hesitated a moment. Then he turned the door handle silently, pushed the door half an inch, dropped to his knees, pushed the door wide open, and



"How many of these do we have to win to exchange for a packet of cigarettes?"

crawled into Mr. Toole's room without attracting attention.

People who believe in invigorating the mind always stress the fact that mental processes should be going on all the time. They declare that a well-ordered mind should never be blank, but that it should fasten itself on to any problem that floats before it. The experience of R. J. Wilkie as he crawled across Mr. Toole's floor supports this view, for his mind, invigorated by raw onion, fastened on to the problem presented by Mr. Toole's carpet.

The Managing Director's carpet was

a square one, standing in the middle of the room. It was a brown carpet covered with a large diamond pattern running to the border, and as R. J. Wilkie crawled across it he found that his knees and his hands fitted neatly into four of the diamonds. He had scarcely started to move towards the desk when he found that instead of moving forwards he was moving sideways, like a crab, and attempting to complete a circle within the square while moving his knees and his hands one diamond further at a time. Three times R. J. Wilkie reached the border

without completing his circle, and three times he started out again. He had just started on his fourth attempt when he heard a rustle of paper behind him and then Mr. Toole's voice. "Wilkie," said Mr. Toole, "what are you doing there?"

"I am trying to complete a circle, Sir," R. J. Wilkie told Mr. Toole, "while moving my hands and my knees one diamond at a time."

Although Mr. Toole appeared to be a man of unvarying austerity, whose thoughts were rarely free from hardware, this was not the case. Mr. Toole frequently relaxed. Indeed he was a profound believer in relaxation, and whenever he had been thinking of hardware for so long that tiny galvanized buckets were dancing before his eyes, he stopped thinking of it and allowed his mind to dwell on puzzles. He liked to solve acrostics and anagrams, and to form squares with five matches, moving two at a time, and often in his office his thoughts had been engaged by the problem which his chief charges clerk was now attempting to solve. Mr. Toole sprang to his feet and stood beside R. J. Wilkie's prostrate body.

"I think I can show you how to do it," he said. He got on his hands and knees and began to crawl round the carpet in the opposite direction to that taken by R. J. Wilkie.

Mr. Toole's study of the problem presented by the diamond pattern on the square carpet had been entirely theoretical. But now he began to put his theory into practice he perceived that it was sound. Moving his hands and knees one diamond at a time, he moved towards the completion of a

circle without touching the border. He had only one more move to make, when he was confronted by an obstacle. R. J. Wilkie was in the way.

"Move over there, Wilkie," said Mr. Toole. "You are occupying my last diamond." But R. J. Wilkie did not move. He too had at last discovered the secret, and was afraid of losing it again if he gave ground.

"Come along, Wilkie, play the game," said Mr. Toole. "Get off my diamond."

"No, Sir," said R. J. Wilkie, "you get off mine."

Up to this point Mr. Toole's feelings towards R. J. Wilkie had been those of an explorer towards his fellow adventurer, but now they underwent a sudden change. He felt as a scientist would feel if some clumsy oaf knocked the hammer out of his hand as he was about to split an atom, or as stout Cortez would have felt as he stood silent upon a peak in Darien if some fool had bumped into him from behind. Mr. Toole's face went white with anger. He rose to his feet and strode to his desk. "You can take a week's notice, Wilkie," he said as he sat down.

Mr. Toole's words fell on R. J. Wilkie like a cold shower. The elation he had felt on discovering how to complete his circle suddenly left him. The thousands of tiny veins round the brain which had been free a moment ago became clogged. His mind lost its vigour, and he stood up unable to speak.

"You may go now," Mr. Toole informed him.

But R. J. Wilkie could not move. He gulped twice and said "But, Mr.

Toole . . ." three times. Mr. Toole examined some letters and did not look up.

"I am sorry, Mr. Toole," R. J. Wilkie stammered, and as he waited a tear came into Mr. Toole's right eye. It was followed by one in his left eye, then by another in his right, until Mr. Toole's eyes were gushing so much that he had to take out his pocket handkerchief and wipe them. Mr. Toole was puzzled. His feelings towards R. J. Wilkie were still harsh but, being unaware that his head was only six inches away from R. J. Wilkie's raw onion, he presumed that his heart was under the influence of some ungovernable emotion. He could only conclude that he must be sorry for R. J. Wilkie without knowing it.

"All right, Wilkie," he said at length, "we will forget about it. But don't let this be a precedent."

"No, Sir; oh, no, Sir," said R. J. Wilkie with emphasis. "Thank you, Sir. If you will excuse me, Sir, there are one or two items to check in my basket before you go through it. I will take the basket away, Sir, and return it in a moment."

"Very well, Wilkie," said Mr. Toole.

As soon as R. J. Wilkie reached his own room he took the slices of raw onion from the basket and threw them out of the window. They fell on a roof just below, and remained there for several months. Whenever Watkins called early in the morning and asked him whether he was still feeling sluggish, R. J. Wilkie would walk to the window and stare at the slices of raw onion on the roof. He believed that they invigorated his mind.



"Simpkin's Soap Suds! I tell you I can't do it. I just CAN'T!"

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